THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) In view of the prevailing high international price and decline in the domestic production of pulses due to drought, to make available imported pulses to the consumers at reduced cost, 5% reduction in import duty of pulses, as against prevailing duty rate of 10% has been suggested. Imports allowed under OGL have considerably helped in containing the consumer prices of "Dal".

Prices of pulses

3015. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a decline in production of pulses in view of the drought situation this monsoon; and

(b) if so, the corrective steps taken to help keep prices of pulses down?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) The first advance estimate of foodgrains production for 2002-03 indicates the kharif production of pulses at 4.24 million tonnes as against the production of 5.09 million tonnes during kharif 2001-02, a decline of 17% due to drought situation this monsoon.

(b) The persisting gap in demand and availability of pulses is, to a large extent, met by imports. Imports of pulses are placed under OGL with a lower import duty of 10% to augment its availability in the country. Imports of 2.18 million tonnes of pulses during 2001-02 and 0.74 million tonnes for April-August, 2002 have helped in containing the prices at reasonable levels.

Export subsidy for sugar

3016. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: